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VOX HUMANA

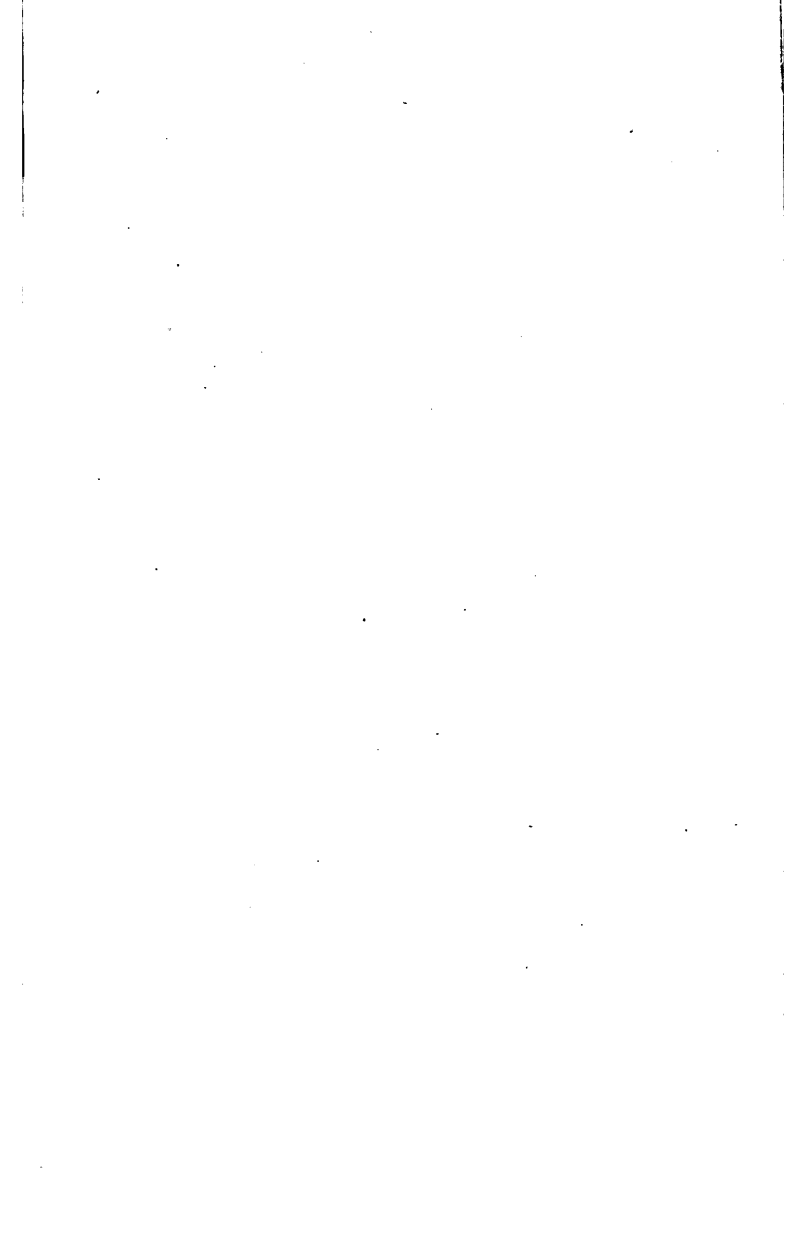


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VOX HUMANA



VOX HUMANA

Poems

BY

JOHN MILLS

WITH PORTRAITS

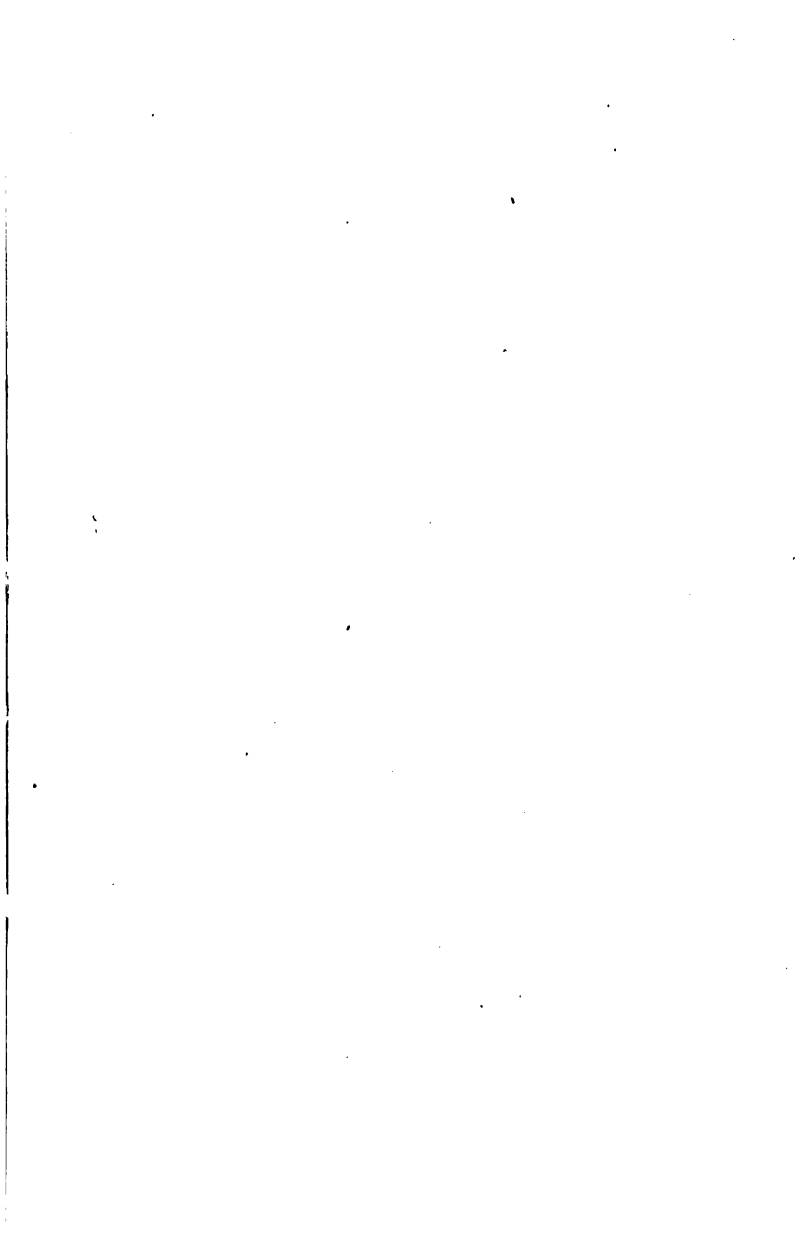
London

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

MDCCCXCVII

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Yours very truly
John M. Wells 1894

St. Louis, Mo. March 10, 1892
Dear Mr. [Name] I have just received
your letter of the 8th inst. and am
glad to hear that you are well. I am
also well and hope this letter will find
you the same. I am writing you
a few lines to let you know that I
am still alive and well.

I am writing you a few lines to let
you know that I am still alive and
well. I am writing you a few lines
to let you know that I am still
alive and well. I am writing you
a few lines to let you know that
I am still alive and well.

Very truly,
[Signature]



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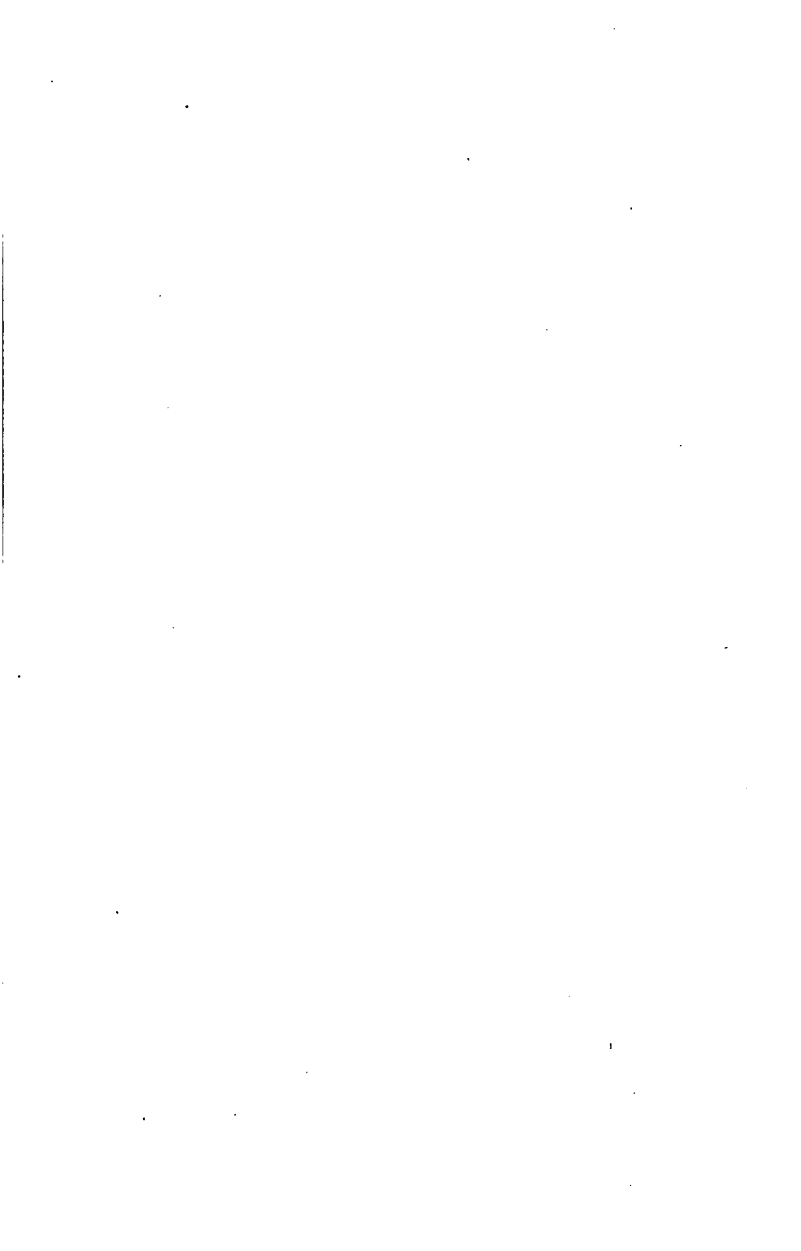
FATHER, uplifted wondering to thy Face
Were our first glances. Slowly did we grow
To feel its charm and influence, and to know
By heart the lines of mingled power and grace.
Thought's sculpture round thine eyes we loved to trace,
Grave eyes, yet lit with humour, and aglow
With tenderness from deeper fires below.

Dark now, and cold, and empty is thy place !

Yet still for us, athwart the gathering gloom
That morning vision shines, a beckoning Star ;
And still, beyond the silence of the tomb,
For us thy voice rings, sounding from afar
Its " Comfort ye ! "—voice of a vanished Home,
Enshrined where Love and Home unclouded are.

FILIA.

November, 1896.



PREFACE

JOHN MILLS was born at Bank Top, Ashton-under-Lyne, on December 16, 1821, and died at Northwold, Bowdon, on September 26, 1896. His was a unique and many-sided nature. A student of statistics, an authority in banking and finance, a man of shrewd sense and of keen humour, he was yet at heart a poet; and born a musician.

He owed his real education rather to his own thirst for knowledge, steady reading, and enthusiastic sympathy with the great thinkers of his day, than to any special teaching. His mind was shaped by Wordsworth and Coleridge, by Richter, Emerson, and Carlyle. His lifelong friend, Prof. W. B. Hodgson, of Edinburgh, early drew him into touch with projects of reform in educational matters, and deepened his interest in social, economic, and financial problems. In these last he was also closely associated with Prof. Jevons, and for many years he found sympathetic society in the group of

thinking men who were drawn together by the genial influence of his earliest and closest friend, the late Alexander Ireland.

That this book did not appear during the writer's lifetime is due partly to his native shrinking from prominence or self-assertion, but still more to the severely critical and fastidious taste which made it hard for him to feel that what he had written might not yet be amended or more perfectly finished. It is hoped that some interesting reminiscences of his life may be issued before long, but those to whom his poems are a precious legacy offer, at this time, no biography. It seems better to let him speak for himself in the following pages.

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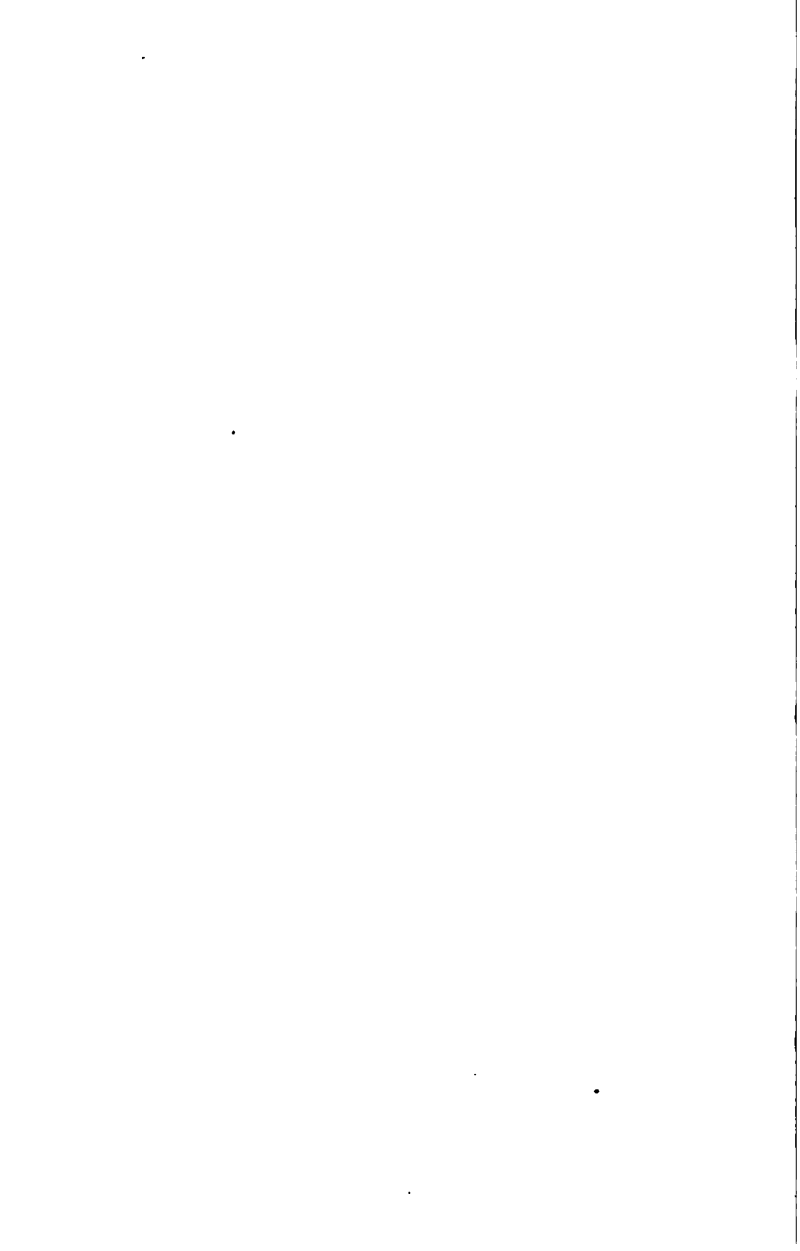
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SONNETS



LUX IN TENEBRIS LUCET

DARK is the north with storm from cope to base,
 And lightning, like a wrathful seer of doom,
 Scrawls a fierce Scripture on the solid gloom,
 Blanching for one white moment the earth's face
 With a shot glare that's gone and left no trace ;
 But westward, o'er black bastions rimmed with
 bloom

Of sunset, lo ! a field of sky with room
 For all the wain to throb in tranquil space.

The passionate fire-streak from the cloud has
 passed,

The sunset bloom is blotted into night ;
 Yet those inexorable stars hold fast

The secret of that yet serener light
 Which, somewhere, curtained thick from sense
 and Time,

Shines on, shines on, eternal and sublime.

1851.

LIFE IN DEATH

HEROES ! The light that from your levelled steel
 Flashed as ye charged up Alma's fiery hill
 Quickened more life in men than ye could kill ;
And when our flame-girt steedsmen could but reel
To hideous death beneath a bloody heel,
 Each as he fell smote myriads with a thrill
 Of the great sense of man's unmastered will
That may be crushed, but does not bow nor
 kneel.

'Twas the same shock of your unfaltering line
 Struck tenfold legions down the misty steep
And from our souls the deadly Anodyne
 Of sensual calm that drugged us into sleep.
Waking, we gazed on the white face of death,
Then stood—a nation, breathing deeper breath.

1855.

THANKS !

Not only that ye score our righteous hate
 With a sheer dint upon the tyrant's cheek,
 Nor that ye shield the injured and the weak,
 Snatching from Wrong's red grasp the brand of
 fate,
 Nor that ye bar with steel the Golden Gate,
 That the barbaric tide may never break
 In thunder o'er the West, and drown the shriek
 Of freedom, once again made desolate :

For these great gains be thanked ! But more
 than all
 Be thanked that ye have given to man again
 Assurance of his manhood, and the call
 Which like a trumpet shakes the souls of men,
 Kindling that old heroic fire which shone
 Alike o'er Inkermann and Marathon !

1855.

AT RYDAL (I).

I **MARVEL** not, ye music-stricken trees
 And winds and waters, that ye ne'er are mute,
 For here, I know, as on a passive lute,
 With mystic mastery doth the Poet seize
 On Nature, and with mild majestic ease
 Through all her forms his own strong ardours
 shoot.

Great thoughts of his lie hoarded at the root
 Of each huge pine through which the mountain
 breeze,

Laden with an emotion, sighs or sings,
 Rocking the while, with soft caress, the bird
 Whose lyric rapture through the valley rings :
 And lo ! the bosom of yon mere is stirred
 With stress of Fancies, while o'er far-off streams
 Imagination flings her golden gleams !

1845.

TO CHARLES SWAIN

UNDER blue skies and by clear stream the song
 Of bird and bard makes antiphon complete,
 And dewy harebells at a minstrel's feet
 Compel from his quick brain an answering throng
 Of floral fancies ; but what spell among
 The thunderous discords of a smoke-clad street,
 Could from the Nature-loving lute entreat
 Music that was so tender, yet so strong ?

Deep in this poet's soul, strung tense and true,
 Thrilled one fine chord, touched to the under-
 tone
 Of the pathetic human, breathing through
 The dissonant war of city mirth and moan.
 So, with his last breath dying on the wind
 Mingles the deathless music of the mind.

1874.

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (2).

AMEN ! my brave old friend, to all thy prayer
 Amen, I say, and may thy faith still stand
 Serenely trustful to the Guider's hand,
 Which, tempering ruthless force with ruthless care,
 May shatter empires, yet each silver hair
 Touch kindly on a brow whose memories grand
 Of genius clustered in thy dear old land,
 Make Age with Youth's immortal graces fair.

O happy he, who, ere his prayer be spoken,
 For answer sweet finds ever at his side
 A loving wife, Heaven's best and purest token
 Of purposed good, whatever may betide ;
 So stands thy Mary, " peace and trust " unbroken
 By Time's dread wheel, thine own perennial
 bride.

1876.

S. E. L. (3)

IN MEMORIAM.

So best. Though hearts must bleed and eyes will
weep

For their own loss and for quick pity's sake,
Yet if I could with touch or whisper take
From off thy wide white brow the seal of sleep
God's sudden hand hath laid there, and the deep
Impassioned soul of thee again awake
To song, I would not move nor breathe to break
The tryst which thou and the choired angels keep.

For thou wast weary ; hid wounds of thine own
Opened to all barbed woes o' the world thy
breast

Till from its depths broke that melodious moan
For the dove's homeward wings and quiet nest ;
And He inclined His ear—and the last tone
Falls faintly from the stars, " At rest—at rest."

1880.

TO W. S. FEVONS

(Drowned, August, 1882)

I

PACING the western strand, I said, "O Sea,
 For boon and benison, ne'er till now denied,
 Came I, remembering how of old thy tide
 Chased ruddy youth through the wild heart of me,
 And thy bold breath so swept my being free
 From Care, that a quick surge of song defied
 Thy multitudinous thunder. Now I bide
 In vain all challenge of that stormful glee.

What ails thee, Ocean? Bold and blithe no more,
 Thy foamless crest, curse-conscious and blood-
 red,
 (With no sky-flush!) back from the shuddering
 shore,
 Reels in sick silence—till the low clouds shed
 Wide blots of darkness like a pall cast o'er
 Thy waste of murderous waters and their dead!

II

DEAD ! For the old pale mystery once again
Sits silent on cold lips. Mere swoon of will
Beneath a tyrannous wave,—can such thing kill
At once the noble heart and strenuous brain,
Quenching for ever in a moment's pain
Thoughts that with harmonies of law could fill
All spheres of thought ? And lies *he* stark and
still
As the brown weeds tossed with him from the
main ?

Not he, be sure, nor any gift God gave
Through him to man. The prescience that
divined
Truth in her ambush, and the spirit brave,
To dare all proof, and flash old falsehoods
blind—
These know no lethal waters, fear no grave—
But live to blend with the Eternal Mind !

*GARFIELD**(September 19, 1881)*

So, having nobly lived, divinely dies
One Greatheart more into the luminous line
Of souls that through Time's black oblivion shine,
And lift us toward their light with beckoning eyes.
Hushed is the surge of party's lust and lies ;
And murder—mad to baffle God's design—
Sees from the hell-flash of its countermines
A sacrificial flame to Heaven arise.

Watching long anguish men have held their breath,
And for rent chords of love they needs must
weep ;
But, for the martyred chief, Life conquers Death.
The heart-beat from his bosom did but leap
Into the nation's heart, where his just will
Rules a new Union, though his voice be still !

VOX HUMANA

“ No Sanctus let the sinner sing,” you say,
 “ Let saints and angels chant the perfect song
 Unmarred by any dissonance of wrong,
 And so make vocal God’s eternal day.”
 Not thus, my friend, you learn His lyric way
 Who from all chords of life smote out the throng
 Of varied elements that, winding long,
 Evolved at last His own consummate lay.

Ah me ! Can any white-souled Seraph know
 More beauty of a spotless Christ than he
 Whose human minor trembles through the
 strain ?

All Heaven’s Hosannas pause to catch the low
 Pulsations of such music as may be
 Distilled from tears of penitential pain !

1888.

STOIC AND CHRISTIAN

SAITH one to me, "Endure, and still endure,
 And if thy wound still sting, endure it still
 Till pain turn blunted from thy granite will ;
 But if it turn not, and thou find no cure,
 Stand to thy resolute will, though Death be sure—
 So pain, that cannot vanquish though it kill,
 Shall from thy pausing blood this truth distil,
 Less is it to be happy than be pure."

Dear Christ ! Shall then this poor proud will of
 mine
 Dare o'er again the conquest Thou hast won,
 Rending the chords of human and divine
 Tuned by Thy death to living unison ?
 Stretch forth and take with that pierced hand of
 Thine
 This Will, that only wills "Thy Will be done !"

DAMIEN

DEATH makes a solemn music of thy name,
 Damien ! And we that hear it bend the knee
 And droop our eyes before the Christ in thee ;
 And though thy life lay hid from flattering fame,
 Death kindles round thy brows the golden flame
 Of sainted sacrifice, that men may see
 How flesh may fail, yet the strong soul stand free
 From the self-curse that is our leprous shame.

O mystery of light from darkness born !
 Love that the leper's loathsome fate would share
 Makes all our woe less utterly forlorn ;
 And from dim isles where Asrael's wings
 unfurled
 Beat a slow terror through the tainted air,
 God's wind blows sweet o'er a distempered
 world !

1889.

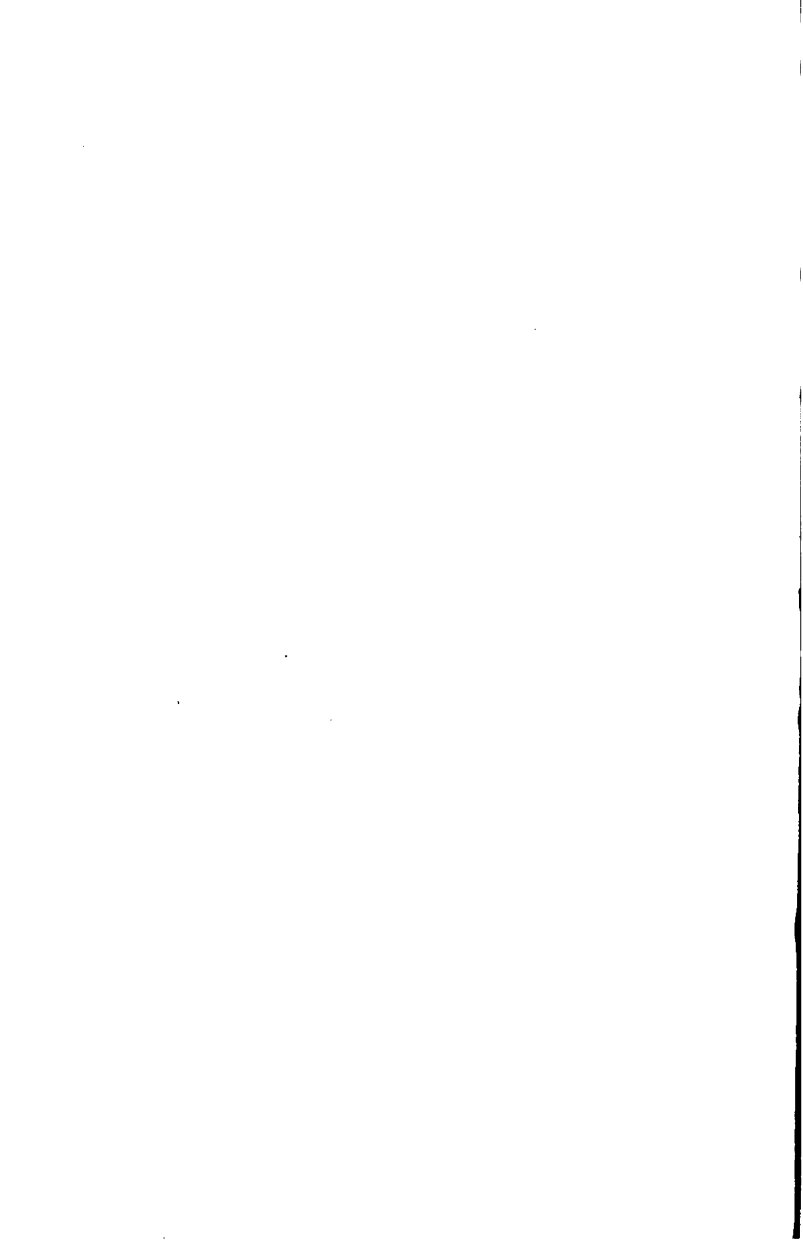
BEETHOVEN—DEAF !

SOME spheral whisper fires the brooding night
 When the weird lightning to earth's bosom
 leaps,
 Or touch of God stirs the massed thunder-heaps
 To shake the world with melodies of might.
 Tell us, seer-minstrel, on thy shrouded height
 With eyes that dare the lightning to their deeps,
 And brows round which the cloudland music
 sweeps,
 Tell us, what sings the tempest in its flight ?

Alas, if when we hear his answering strain,
 The minstrel sighs to feel with baffled breath,
 He storms a toneless universe in vain,
 Where sound to silence swoons, as life to death !
 God ! through Thine Æons when the angels sing,
 Shall *he* not hear those Hallelujahs ring ?

1891.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS



THE LAW

"As a man chooseth, so he is, and so is Nature."—EMERSON.

"The Kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.

To the pure there is no taint ;
 Peril comes not nigh the brave ;
 Free man dreadeth no constraint ;
 Truthful living shuts the grave.

Will, and Work, and Fate alway
 In a certain cycle run :
 Eastward gaze brings dawn of day,
 Battle given is battle won.

Waking dreamer ! *Shut* thine eyes,
 That thou see more clearly this—
 Deep in thine own being lies
 Heaven's expanse, as Hell's abyss.

1847.

DUALITIES

"Alike, but O how different!"—WORDSWORTH.

THE winds, like viewless squadrons, trample down
the ancient woods ;

The winds, with wooing whispers, thrill the little
vernal buds.

The waters, with a whelming sweep, go surging
on their way ;

At matin, trembling tenderly, the dew is on the
spray.

'Tis Love whose mad convulsion leaves a blackened
path behind ;

'Tis Love which is the bloom upon a chastely
tempered mind.

Fiery hearts have worshipped God with flashing
steel, and faggot flame ;

There be silent deeds of mercy done in Jesu's
holy name.

1847.

THE LOOM

FLY, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

Through warp strike woof
For body's behoof ;
Knit Faith with deed
For the soul's need ;
Track gain through loss,
And joy through pain ;—
While the threads cross,
Man grows amain.

Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

Like and unlike
Athwart must strike,
Before the mind
Its world can find.
'Tis the bent ray
That gives us sight ;
The glowing day
Dawns red from night.

Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

THE LOOM

So sun and star,
That flash afar,
Weave God's design
In web divine.
Even human will,
With fleck and flaw,
Is weaving still
Beneath His law.

Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

Hearts mated beat,
As matched threads meet ;
The shuttle's dart
Tears them apart.
Life's changeful dream,
Takes the shot clue ;
With each fresh beam
The Heavens are new.

Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

Love in one whole
Weaves soul with soul,
Even God with Man,
So vast the plan ;
Uplifted high,
The symbol stands
'Twixt earth and sky
Of their crossed hands.

Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

And as *we* weave,
And joy or grieve,
That symbol sheds
On the swift threads
A crimson hue
To mortal sight,
That in God's view
Will be wool's white.
Fly, shuttle, fly, for the end draws nigh,
And the web comes under the Master's eye.

Hushes the boom
Of the thunder-loom,
Falters the wheel
Of the whirling reel :
To the shuttle's flying
The eyes grow dim ;
The worn worker, dying,
Leaves the web to Him.
Stand, shuttle, stand, at the Master's com-
mand,
The web is finished and in His hand !

TO ALEXANDER IRELAND

(on his 35th birthday, with Tennyson's Poems)

Now let me place with reverent hands
 On the memorial-cairn which stands
 At thy mid-point of life, a book
 Within whose pages thou may'st look
 To find the glowing grace of youth
 Mingled with manhood's fearless truth
 As 'twere thy mirror ! Fitted, too,
 With bloom and verdure, to renew
 Perennial pictures of the Past,
 When Autumn skies be overcast.
 My friend, ill-fortune harms not thee,
 And the years touch thee tenderly ;
 If sorrow comes, the missioned pain
 Leaves, as it found, a healthy brain,
 An open brow, a vision clear
 To front the future without fear.
 And thus seven lustres have departed,
 And left thee strong and genial-hearted.
 So be it with thee to the end
 Of life and labour, O my friend,
 Treading with steady step the earth,
 Even to the Death, which is the Birth.

ALBERTINE

THIS old Earth no fairer sight
 Shows than when the morning light
 From ideal worlds breaks in
 Through the clouds of doubt and sin,
 Gliding to those spirit-deeps
 Where a virgin fancy sleeps,
 And the spell of slumber breaking,
 So that Fancy, at her waking,
 Sendeth back through yearning eyes,
 Dreamy looks of soft surprise,
 To the blue and boundless skies.

This the dawn whose mystic sheen
 To the eyes of Albertine
 Wins her soul, and in a glance
 Sums all Nature's pure romance.
 O how bright the heaven must be,
 How enchanting earth and sea,
 Touched by that new light which lies
 Moist and mild in her large eyes !

For as yet no sword of fate
 Flames before her Eden's gate ;—

Flowers of light and fruits of gold
Yet hide well the snaky fold,—
Terror comes not with the name
Of the mysteries, Death and Shame,—
Heaven shines through all human clay,
Angels greet her by the way,—
Love is here, and beauty there,
God and goodness everywhere !

Fact is great, but Faith's divine,
And the gracious heavens, that shine
On the sinner and the saint,
Sometimes open, far and faint,
With a vista'd vision dim
Of the wings of Seraphim,
Which a moment flash, and fade,
Lost in reason's sensual shade,—
And I know not (would I knew !)
Which of these is false or true,
Whether sense be only seeming,
Whether thou or we be dreaming,—
Only this, as God, is sure,
Truest wisdom must be pure,
And 'twere happy could the wise
See this world through thy fair eyes.

LLYN-Y-CAI

("THE LAKE SHUT IN")

O ! QUIET Llyn-y-Cai,
 Is it from earth or sky
 Thou winnest this great depth of calm ?
 Whether, down in the hollow there,
 Of Father Idris' wrinkled palm,
 There is some pulse-beat of the love
 Which holds thee up from taints below
 And wards the gusts that roar above
 From ruffling of a face so fair,

How can I know ?
 Or whether, all athirst for light,
 Like one with sleepless lust of lore,
 Thou, never breaking gaze away
 From searching the blue deeps of day
 Or lusted labyrinths of night,
 Hast chanced to look into God's eye,
 So can be troubled never more,

O ! tell me, Llyn-y-Cai !

But I yearn and speak in vain,
 For the pure and plumbless dark

Which gives no answering hue
To the zenith's living blue
Nor the slant sun's yellow stain,
Heeds not nor hears me,—hark !
How the words in echoes die
Up the sheer cliffs to the sky
While thou dreamest as before,—
And I, standing on thy shore,
Will question thee no more,
Sphinx of waters, Llyn-y-Cai !

Ah ! but if with this handscoop from thy wave
I could drink in a drowsing draft of peace,
Or in the keen-cold flood at once could lave
My glowing limbs, and soul's too torrid heat,
That so the panting pulse and the brain's beat
Might droop together and the fever cease !

But no scarred memories of the Past
With peace can shut us in,
As these torn cliffs, thy guardians vast,
Shut thee, O tranquil Llyn !

For evermore the soul
Lies open to the roll
Of all the importunate winds of fate ;
And every vagrant cloud
That, for its little day,
Trails festive purple on our way
Or draws a threatening shroud,
Blots the reflected splendour of Heaven's Gate !

With no self-centred power
Can *we* shut out the influent spells of life,
And cheat the dialled hour
To win some pauses in the weary strife ;
Nor can a strenuous will
Put down the traitorous heart
That with the foe takes part,
Or bid the waves of passion " Peace, be still ! "

Not masters even of our joy,—
If some soft light but flash
From under a dark lash
And break upon a troubled breast
A trembling Iris in its mirror glows,
And we forget the last annoy,
And for a time are blest ;
But raptures are not rest,—
The billowing passion rocks not to repose.

We, too, against the stars
Wear out an aching gaze
As they vanish and return,
Weaving still the golden maze
That inexorably bars
Our vision from that trans-siderial bourne
Where silent truth stands still
Firmly founded in the one potential Will.

And yet, even when the sight
Dulls to that strain of barren light,
And, whirled from law to law, we feel
Broken upon a restless wheel

That beats the air, but finds no road
To bear a human spirit's load—
There comes some transient tint or tone,
Or flash of a pure pencil-ray
As from the girdle of God's throne,
Cleaving the darkness of the common day—
And then, like one with sudden gleam
That wakes, and heaves dread thoughts away,
We sigh, "Thank God, it was a dream!"

Up! I will yearn no more
Upon this sheltered shore,
Sighing, O lake, thy peace to share—
But will go where the strong winds blow,
Blowing strength to do and bear—
And in labour's gathering zest,
Finding better than blank rest,
Will follow that eternal hope
Which beckons from the craggy slope
To heights where we may dare to be and know!

For, somewhere rooted in the tracts of Time,
Yet towering o'er the cloudy range
And all the belts of elemental change,
There stands a mount of God sublime,
Crowned with His rose of light
That knows nor day nor night ;—
And men that gazed afar
Have sometimes its true radiance seen,
Though dimmed or warped by mists between
To crescent, cross, or star,

And mortal grew immortal with the sight !
And could we higher climb, and higher,
To purge our vision with that fire,
The close reticulate threads of natural Law
That stifled us before with fruitless awe
Should lucid grow as the fine films of dew
Hung over autumn woods when morn looks thro',
And we should front their semblance without fear,
Meeting the glance of God, that makes all clear.

Sept., 1859.

TO HIS FATHER (4)

FOR heroes, piles of sorrowing stone—
 For poets, wreaths upon the bier—
 Father, for thee a filial tear,
 And words thy quiet heart would own.

Thou hast loved much—much good hast tried—
 With patient courage fought thy fight,—
 Day's burden borne, then bade good-night,
 Seeing one beckoning from Christ's side.

All speech of mortal praise might sleep,
 Since thou hast heard thy Lord's "Well done ;"
 But memories break like glints of sun
 O'er love by sorrow shadowed deep.

And this our love were blind and vain,
 If we had missed the covenant sign,
 Which, in each God-set task of thine,
 Made sacraments of work and pain.

In social storm or civic strife—
 In murky roar of mart or mill,
 Clear lights of mild but earnest will
 Touched all the heaving crests of life.

Lo ! the wan weaver cannot speak
His sobbing sorrow o'er thy grave ;
Lo ! the great engine's grimy slave
Scores memories on his channelled cheek.

God's " little children " know the hand
Which lifted them into his breast ;
Some gave thee welcome to thy rest—
Some bear thy blessing through the land.

Rest, rest ! To thee the mystery's known
Of the long grating to and fro
Of those dark gates which crushed thee so ;—
Thou moanest not—we will not moan.

Rest, rest ! A hand's familiar touch
Has led thee in behind the veil ;
Faith shall not faint though flesh be frail,
Nor will we mourn thee overmuch.

THE LOST FAIRY

IN MEMORIAM

GONE !—She was a tricksome child,
 Her very baby-blood ran wild ;
 Her laugh set million buds a-breaking,
 And all the little birds match-making.
 Hither—thither—she flashed from the watcher,
 Not fleetest foot nor eye could catch her ;
 But she, true Fay, herself unseen,
 Left dancing tracks of vivid green,
 And oft on meadows dropped in flight
 A mantlet blue or jerkin white,
 Bestud with gold of pure assay,
 But fairy gold, that lasts—a day !
 Once she crept with silent stealth
 Up to the top of the sleeping elm,
 And with caws and screams broke his winter
 dreams,
 Then gathered in armfuls the slant sunbeams,
 And poured such a drench of the yellow wealth,
 That laburnums were fringed with the fee of a
 realm,

And the golden drip of its overflow
Made a prince of the pauper furze below,—
Who, at quick fortune, grew overglad,
And glared, and flared, and stared, stark mad !

The prankish thing would slyly move,
On an April day, the curtain spray
Where, in a thick thorn's darkness, lay
A round nest, soft with leaves and love,
And would drop therein, with noiseless finger,
An egg of her famous advent singer,—

And lie *perdu*

Till the true mother bird fluttered back to her
nest,
And her mate poised him proudly, to sing her his
best ;
Then the elf, in the tones of her herald bird,
Would flute (with a fall from the minor third)
Cuckoo ! cuckoo !

How she mocked our human hearts,
And played at once our many parts !
In painting, so natural, you'd almost believe
Her scenes had been touched up by Telbin and
Grieve ;
From a sky's tawny flush to the breast of a
thrush,
Nothing came wrong to her marvellous brush,
But the way that she stippled a dawn or a dusk in
Was a secret she never told any but Ruskin.

She touched a pulse like learned leech,
Proved heart and lungs—gave fillips to
 each,
And only overplayed this rôle
By curing patients of their dole.

She preached in cathedral woods sublime
Of the great new birth and the better clime ;
In the west wind's voice she intoned the creed
Of love and warmth and kindly deed,
And she only frowned at the east wind's schism,
Full of ill nature and rheumatism.

But most the Fairy loved to play
 The part of chorus-master ;
She called her choir at break of day,
Touched the key-note on Memnon's string,
And bird after bird began to sing
 Andante, allegro, presto, and faster,

Till the song flew along, swift and strong, and
 ne'er lost a
Tittle of *tempo*, for she, like King Costa,
Could shoot her own soul through the wild-
 surging notes,
And draw music at will from a thousand throats,
As her bâton of light smote out the clear time,—
Even I was caught up, and chirped in with a
 rhyme.

But yesterday, at noon,
Faint with the glow of June,
The child was wandering slowly ;
When, with a thrill and start,
As of a pang at heart,
She paused and bended lowly ;
For on the blown roses a beautiful maiden
Lay couched, with her eyelids slumber-laden ;
On her bosom a name in bloom-cypher was
wreathed,
And heaved with the deep beat of life as she
breathed.

The child with a kiss woke up the new comer,—
Looked wistfully round her, and fled. 'Tis
Summer !

1858.

NORTH AND SOUTH

1861

BRAVE North ! thy Franklin, bold and wise,
Drew Freedom's lightning from the skies,
And flashed it through thy living chain
Of hand-linked States from main to main ;
Its southward course a fetter stayed,
Round which its lambent omens played ;
But now, from clouds of living thunder
It leaps, to blast the bond asunder !

PROFIT AND LOSS

BETTER lose all, if all the soul shall cost,
For if the soul be missing, all is lost ;
But win a soul, though that be your sole winning,
Your profit has no end,—and no beginning.

NO COTTON !

AUTUMN, 1862

HEAVY and cold as Death,
On the breast of the troubled land,
Sits Fear, and heaves with the heaving breath,
And clutches the clammy hand !

For the thing we thought but an evil dream
Is near,—is here : 'tis a wind of doom
Has frozen the fount of the snow-white stream
That flowed to the lips of the thirsty loom,
And has palsied the giant, Steam,
Till his lusty limbs—shaft, piston, and beam,
Stand stark and still in the gloom.

Thunder-born Silence ! Is it not strange
That we find no peace in the change ?
We that have felt the live brain roll round
And grate like the wheels with an iron sound,—
That have watched the engines that crushed and
tore
The fair white fleece, flowing evermore,
And the thousand "throstles" that whistled and
whirred,
(Alas, for a soft-breasted woodland bird !)

And the restless mule, like a living rack,
Twisting out the frail clews, clashing thither and
back

To grasp them, and tug them, and twist them again
(So demons may twist the frail heart-strings of
men !)

And in long low spaces, with bickering yell,
Looms, lashing the air with a frenzy of hell,
As the warp was shed, and the weft was sped,
And the broad piece lengthened, thread by thread,
While shuttle and batten, with shocks of pain,
Smote the pattern deep in the quivering brain !

And now, when the wheels stand still,
Through all the dreary mill,

How is it their silence stuns us more
Than their old habitual roar ?

How, when the cold columnar flue
Breathes not a smut on the limpid blue,

Our sky grows darker than before ?

Alas, the thunder, the smoke and strife,
Shot, once for all, through our tissue of life.
This purer air, this clearer light,
Cuts short our breath, brings graves in sight.

The very engines, that seem stark-dead,—
Famished for Cotton, as we for Bread,—
Front us with dull, pathetic stare,
Like engine-ghosts in the weird white air,
Till we shudder to feel the cold link of our fates ;
The rust gnaws already,—the sure worm waits !

Iron and flesh, to rust and rot,
Or live by grace of cotton and coal !
O God, forgive us if we forgot
Thy breath is in us, a living soul !
But to feel the daily tightening knot
That binds man fast to material dole,—
To know that the very threads we have spun
Must measure the course dear lives shall run,—
That a pulse must flag with each pausing wheel,—
That Time is wound from a dwindling reel,—
That Love's hopes waste with warp and weft,
Till in our last web but a shroud is left !
O ! what if some film of this world dulled our
eyes,
To the scripture supernal that's writ in the
skies,—
And our ears, 'twixt the sounds and the silence of
dread,
Have not heard what the still small voice has
said !

* * * * *

Mystic fibre of the West,
Gleaming there so chastely white,
Soft to touch and fair to sight,
Blanched with common dews and light,
With thy summer snow the tropic sod
In a goodly raiment seems new drest,
As by the immediate hand of God,
And none would think of a curse exprest
With thy stainless tresses from the pod.

Is it thou, so soft and pure a thing,
By passionate greed anointed " King,"
Hast held thy state mid courtly revels
Fit for a royalty of devils ?
Is thy silver secreted so fairy-fine
To be twisted to fetters and whips for slaves ?
Did the dawn-dews glisten, the clear sun shine,
To paint thee with war's bloody blazon of woe ?
Dost thou need the dread tillage of human graves
For thy roots to strike in, and fatten, and grow ?

White witness, rather, of Heaven's will
That the earth be pure and gentle still,
Full well we know thou tak'st no stain
From the red grasp of guilty gain ;
That hunger and heart-break are not from thee,
And no slaves were thine, if thyself wert free.

Lo, thou art waiting in new sunny lands
For wings that may waft thee to work's eager
hands,—
Wings of steam that may waft thee more fleet
than the wind,
O'er African deserts, down rivers of Ind,
From bright Austral Edens where long grasses
wave,
From islands by Britain breathed pure of a slave ;
And already against the black round of our night
Gleam beckoning signs, drawn with pencils of
light,
Calling Argonaut Commerce to ransom this fleece
That enwraps golden treasures of plenty and peace !

Meanwhile, eyes are wistful and wet,
And cheeks are hollow and pale,
But a strenuous heart helps us yet
To smother a half-uttered wail,
For we meet in the shade of our narrow ways
An Angel with searching and serious gaze,
Bearing ever before her a cruse and a cup ;—
Dear Christ ! if she faint, do Thou bear her up
Till her sister Angel that's weeping afar
Shall close with a touch the grim gashes of War !

THE FIRST SNOWDROP

O WEE white winsome thing !
What mean'st thou, blossoming
Thus without rhyme or reason,
Like one born out of season ?

Thy tiny dome peers up
And unfolds its outer cup
With such a pearly streak
Upon its rounded cheek,—
And the tinier nest between,
Inlined with palest green,
So guards with jealous fold
Its heart of clustered gold,—
And thy thin thread of stem
So droops its diadem,
And in thy every delicate feature
Thou art so fairy-fine a creature,—
Meseems, when Spring's first breath
Touched the white winding-sheet
That wrapped the wintry earth,
As she kissed the robe of death
One drop thrilled up, her lips to meet,
Transfigured, vital, tender-sweet,
A flower kissed into birth !

So Fancy may dissemble,
But here comes a biting blast,
And the sleet drives fierce and fast
To tell thee Winter is not past ;
And I wonder, more and more,
When the hurly-burly's o'er
To see thou smilest as before,
And dost not tremble,
But tak'st the North-wind's howling stress
As if it were a blithe caress,
The very tune of tenderness !

Verily no breath of Spring
Shall awake so brave a thing
As my wee white Winterling,
When, to deck her peeping pets,
Primroses and violets,
She gathers from the day each hue
Of sunny gold and skyey blue,
And from the night her diamond dew,—
And bids the dawn-lark flood the air
With songs to tell them they are fair.

Unflattered and unsung,
Born to no splendid dower
Of passionate hues and sensuous lays,
Of dreamy nights and gorgeous days,
Thou, pale and saintly flower,
From Nature's soul hast sprung
While she was all too young
To blush and burn beneath the power
Of the warm Sun's enamoured gaze ;

A thing of spiritual birth,
Too slightly mixed with aught of earth
To stain the earliest beam of light
That lit thy cheek with lucent white.

And so, as when thy face

First on my vision stole,

I feel some deeper grace

Pass, as from soul to soul :

And I wonder now no more

That thou smilest at the roar

When old Winter blows his blast,

And the snow drives thick and fast,—

For I hear an undertone of psalm

Telling the secret of thy rooted calm :—

“ Heavenly Una knows no wrong,

Feeble Duty's soul is strong,

Truth listens to an inward song ;

Fear is for Fortune's painted slave,—

Be pure, and thou must needs be brave ! ”

1868.

THE BAT

WHAT saw we as we sat, that dubious thing
 With hairy body and with leathern wing
 Flitting and floundering through the twilight air
 With zig-zag dart eccentric, here and there,—
 Blind through the day, then chasing light in vain,
 Bruising itself against a window-pane,
 A legless mouse, a bird that cannot fly,
 A dual monster, and a living lie.

Ghost of some witless poet this, intent
 To rise into some finer element
 Than God gave man to breathe in and see through,
 And do the work his duty bids him do ;
 Of one who, lacking power of patient thought,
 Fooled by false Fancy, and with dreams dis-
 traught,
 Spurned earth's dull sod and strained his hybrid
 mind
 For the seer's sight until the sense grew blind,
 And, soaring without will or vision clear,
 Fell, dashed to earth from the supernal sphere.

To be true Poet needs must be true Man,
Faithful in sense and soul to God's good plan,—
Confronting with clear eyes the common day,
And treading with firm step the common way.
To such, not blinking through a twilight gloom,
Nor tempting with strained flights ignoble doom,
The heavens will open, and those visions shine
Which, when most human, are the most divine.

This will we say at least, without all fear,
Whate'er may be our duty or our sphere,
We must be *something's* self, be this or that,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, but not a human bat !

1871.

THIRLMERE

YET, as of old when first, enchanted lake,
Thy beauty on our youthful vision rose,
We love thee as thou art, even while we break
The calm that veils thy virginal repose.

Thirsting for thee, but with no ruthless touch,
The city woos thee for thy lucent wave ;
And for that largess fain would give thee much
That may befit the city's bride—not slave.

We bid the tributary hills endow
Thee with new melody and ampler grace ;
And when by man's warm lips the naiad's vow
Is sealed, a soul shall dawn into thy face.

And thou shalt know, elected queen of lakes,
Use will not make thy beauty less, but more ;
Linked with humanity, all nature takes
A deeper speech and meaning than before.

And as thy waters, laughing, leap the brink
Of falls, or down the brook sing gentler notes,
With music quite as sweet the limpid drink
Shall gurggle down a million thirsty throats.

Thy Wythburn's tiny temple shall point still
Man's vows to Heaven for floods of blessing
sent,
And Mercy's symbol thy broad cup shall fill
For chalice to our thankful sacrament.

So, running Mercy's errand, fear not thou ;
Thou shalt be sweet and sacred as of yore,
When first a grey cloud wrapped Helvellyn's brow,
Or sunbeams rippled to thy silver shore.

1877.

THE PLAINT OF THE PRIMROSE

My homeward footsteps paused, a sighing sound
 Of pain upon my ear or fancy stole,
 And in my path, in miry plight, I found
 A Primrose from some Tory buttonhole.

"Ah me ! ah me !" it said with broken breath,
 "After so sweet a life what cruel fate
 Could doom a Primrose to this dismal death,
 A torn and tainted badge of party hate.

"Oh, Mother Nature, when thy sun and dew
 My pale blood quickened to the bliss of life,
 Was it for this my golden petals grew,
 To blazon forth the curse of human strife ?

"Am I that Primrose of men's tranquil dream,
 The poet's darling and the painter's pet ;
 The herald flower of Spring and Hope supreme,
 And type of love on Beauty's bosom set ?

"For death is not the sting of death to me,
 But that man's dream of me in him is dead,
 Love's type, Hope's herald never more to be,
 Nor tender Herrick sing the tears I shed.

"Ah me ! ah me !" The tones grew faint and
slow ;

I held the withered Primrose in my hand,
And in my soul a sympathy of woe.

And a grey silence fell on all the land.

IN MEMORIAM—W. B. HODGSON, 1880

ONE born to teach
 Clear thought—well-ordered speech—
 And social law, for all through each :
 Devout on no dogmatic plan
 But praising God by serving man ;
 Testing all lore by honest sense,
 Intolerant only of pretence ;
 Wise, winning, witty to the end,
 The trusted guide, the genial friend
 Lies here, his work well done
 His rest well won !

(The last two lines are, to use the writer's own words, "A Reminiscence" of the following epitaph on his brother Samuel, which he wrote in January, 1878 :—

" His work well done,—
 His race well run,
 His crown well won,—
 Here let him rest.")

*LINES**IN MEMORY OF A. S. LIPSCOMB, 1891 (5)*

SHE who by night could track the starry way,
Has found death's darkness made immortal day ;
When all the lamps of science cease to guide,
Christ's beckoning smile shall evermore abide.

ALFRED TENNYSON, POET-BARON

HE, *primus inter pares*, though last made,
By his sole stature shall the rest degrade,
A queen may dub him lord, but, hush your fears—
What royal touch can make the lords his peers?

1884.

A "NINETEENTH CENTURY" TRILOGY¹

SAITH Poz, "Let man put God upon the shelf,
 And if he must adore, adore himself" ;
 But Weissnicht thinks "a God—lest you should
 doubt Him,
 Is more a God the less you know about Him" ;
 And Judex growls, "Give us but power and pelf,
 Then if there's no God, we can do without Him."

'Tis said that man than all his creeds is better,
 And so each leaves the Deity his debtor
 By honouring His name with a big letter.

1884.

¹ See papers in the *Nineteenth Century* by Frederick Harrison, Herbert Spencer, Justice Stephen.

IRISH SONG

OCH ! Mary O'Lairy,
 She trips like a fairy
 In moonshine jigs on the village green ;
 And the boys all do sigh
 Widout well knowing why,—
 She's the bliss (and the blister) of swate Clogaheen.

Her eyes full of natur',
 Are pink like a tater,
 Bad luck to their aikuils that iver I seen ;
 And her bright goulden hair,
 Like the dawnin' so fair,
 Has set fire to all bosoms in swate Clogaheen.

She scured (skewered) with an arrow
 My heart to the marrow,
 And picked all my bones mighty sharp and clean ;
 But the crayture grew kind :
 We were both of a mind,—
 And shuicide raged in swate Clogaheen.

There was Larry O'Rourke,
And he swore like a Turk
To shoot himself dead for the village queen ;
But faith, he forgot
To put in the shot,
And if he had *not*,
There'd have been no brains less in swate Cloga-
heen.

And horrid Pat Tuckitt
Put his head in a bucket,
And would have been choked, but took care to be
seen ;
Cold lead, steel, and water
Couldn't make enough slaughter
For the beautiful daughter
Of the swatest of villages, swate Clogaheen.

Och, Mary O'Lairy,
She vowed to be chary,
And loving and true as the ivy green ;—
Next day roystering Barney,
He tipped her the blarney—
Goodbye, my false Fairy, goodbye Clogaheen !

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR CHARLES AND
LADY HALLÉ TO AUSTRALIA

(The programme of the last concert of the series just closed, included Mendelssohn's "Calm of the Sea and Prosperous Voyage," and Thalberg's "Home, Sweet Home.")

I

It is the time when, borne on balmy wings
Of the soft South, breaks on our sterner zone
A surge of song, and lyric rapture rings
Till all our island woods give tone for tone.
What fittest embassy our thanks may bear,
And match the boon with largess of our own ?
On shore and sea a peerless minstrel pair
Beneath the Southern Cross awhile shall roam ;
And thus will music, vernal everywhere,
In two far-sundered lands make equal springs,
And North and South be linked in " Home, sweet
home ! "

II

Swift but all-gentle be the waves and winds
As that tone-dream "Sea calm and Happy way,"
Till the proud keel through seething silver finds
Welcome and rest, claspt in an Austral bay.
Then, Minstrels, wandering o'er the broad lands,
tell
By the tense chords that tremble to your sway
That secret of your art you know so well—
How Form, the Goddess, from the ocean foam
Of sound emerging comes with us to dwell,
And Melody like Love is born, and binds
The life-long harmonies of "Home, sweet home!"

III

Meantime your leal old friends full surely know
When you the multitudinous heart enthrall
With storm of keys or sweep of magic bow
Ere the strain dies upon some tender fall ;
Or when your summons by the flashing wand
Crowned kings of symphony and song shall call
With treasured lays from many a tuneful land,
Some echo from an old familiar dome
Shall steal upon you, memory, heart, and hand,
So, wistful sooth, you cannot chose but go
Whither that echo guides you "Home, sweet
home!"

THE DEAD PANSY

"And there is Pansies, that's for thoughts."—OPHELIA.

Poor pet Pansy ! Not a week
 Of sun and rain has passed since I
 Touched the velvet of thy cheek,
 Looked into thy golden eye,
 And thought thy petal's colour-freak
 Fine as the gorgeous butterfly
 That just then came fluttering by,—
 Thought that if thou couldst but speak,
 I might hear a fragrant sigh
 Into mournful music break,
 Mourning that thou couldst not fly
 And soar, a Psyche-flower, on high,
 But rooted to the earth must die !

Die ! Ah, then I will not wreak
 On the faded films that lie
 In my palm the human shriek
 That beats upon the steel-blue sky.

He who painted every streak
Of thy purple pageantry
Made thee to be glad and meek,
Unvext by any fatal "why?"—
And though strong manhood needs must seek
Assurance that may Death defy,
Yet I dare not deem thee weak
In thy serene mortality.

Autumn, 1883.

*ON RECEIVING FROM GENOA TWO POR-
TRAITS OF MARY COWDEN CLARKE,
ONE EXPRESSING HUMOUR, THE OTHER
SADNESS. 1883.*

ONE face—faces twain I see ;
Twain, yet one,—how may it be ?
This with mirth's light laughter beams,
That in Memory's shadow dreams :
Here be quips, just quaintly spoken,
There sad silence rests unbroken.
If not Dolorosa hight,
This must be Giocosa bright,—
But if either face and name,
It the other doth defame :
True and false, I take my oath
She is neither and yet both !

Rede me now this riddle, Nature,
Teaching me right nomenclature !

Nature answers, "She is one
I have wrought rare spells upon
Since, a cradled child, I've known her.
And played Santa Claus,—the donor
Each new year of some new gladness,
Checkered sometimes with sweet sadness ;

For I found her a quick soul
Capable of bliss and dole,—
So I dropt from kindly skies
Light and shadow through her eyes,
That in all the future years
Might break forth in smiles and tears ;
Chanted song and organ-tone
Set her pulse to mirth or moan ;
Pensive thought and rainbow fancies
Wove her girlhood's sweet romances
Shot with many a golden clew
Spun by poets old and new.

" Then at last I touched her life
With Love's spell, and made her—wife !
Ne plus ultra,—say you so ?
Nature could no further go ?
Henceforth she is caught and bound,
In the spin-wheel's narrow round ?

" Nay, the child I had endowed
With a soul of sun and cloud,
Knew a magic to compel
From my hand its final spell.
Grasped the secret of my power
To provide her noblest dower,
Bade me teach her to unroll
All the wealth of Shakespeare's soul !

" Then a joy predestined long
Seized her spirit, made her strong
With knit nerves and calm intent
For a life's great sacrament.

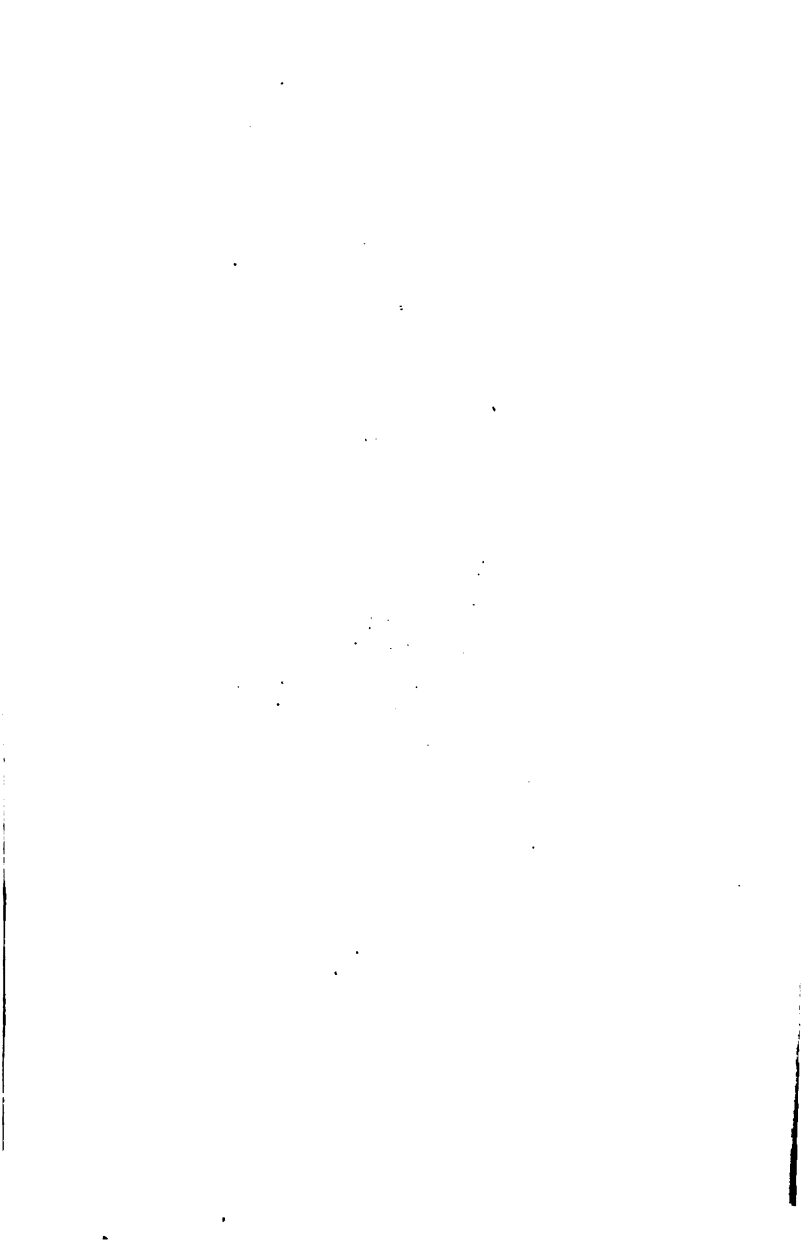
Who but she had dared to ask
From the bard who pierced my mask
Glimpses of his stolen fire,
Mystic force that could inspire,
Neath the curtains of the brain,
Pomp of passion, tragic pain,
All the Drama's changing theme,
Winter's Tale and Summer's Dream,
Wit and madness, love and hate,
Writhings in the grip of fate,—
Sung through many a mighty line
By my Poet's art divine ?
Who but she with cosmic toil
Garnered all the radiant spoil,
And through patient years re-strung
All the concords he had sung ?

“ What then if in faces twain
Mirth you find and tragic pain ?
If between them you may choose
Features fitting either Muse,
And in both together see
Thalia-Melpomene ?
All her featured joy and woe
Shakespeare's dual genius show ;
Yet beneath the varying feature
Lives one throbbing human creature,
 Woman,—with a dash of Fairy—
 Such is she ;—her name is Mary ! ”





1874





18/11

BIRTHDAY SONNETS TO HIS WIFE

TO ISABEL—MAY 18, 1849

DEAR Wife ! Thy birth doth truly represent
Beauty's high genesis, even to this day.
No other than the young white-bosomed May
Could be thy natal month ; thy life was blent
With that love-largess she so richly sprent
O'er April's green, and while her tenderest ray
First lit thine orbs, its sister beams did stray
Among the opening buds with like intent.
From the dim blue far o'er thy cradle nest
The poised lark downward shook her mellowest
trills,
Soft southern winds breathed on thee fragrant rest,
Then sighed thy baby-graces to the rills.
The same deep soul to-day all Nature fills,
For thou art fair, and in thy wife-hood blest.

MAY 18, 1850

WITH what enraptured music was expressed
That love of thee which moved thy mother May,
I told at dawn of thy last natal day ;
But with what low-breathed whispers she confessed
That of her brooding love into thy breast
Had crept and nestled one as vital ray
As those which kindled bloom on every spray
Or woke the flutterings in each downy nest,
I told thee not ;—and now I need not tell,
For not one suckling of the sun and dew
Rests on *her* bosom such as clings to *thine* ;
From throat of bird such music never fell
As that which laughs thee melodies divine,
And soundeth nearer heaven than lark's wing ever
flew !

MAY 18, 1857

MAY's heaven is heaped with thunder, and thy
 brow,
 My Isabel, whereon her first fresh light
 Midst the wreathed flowers found wontedly a
 bright
 And placid home, is thunder-shadowed now.
 In those soft-lidded eyes, which could endow
 A loveless world with love, doth crouch the
 might
 Of the leashed lightnings, poised for their fierce
 flight ;
 God of the elements !—I fear and bow !

This is May's mood and Isabel's to-day,
 Love's mood that loves not to be ever calm,
 A threat of storm that doth no longer stay
 Than the rich dissonance trembling in a Psalm.
 Even now, on brow and sky, love hath its way,
 And Nature's soul and mine drink floating balm.

MAY 18, 1859

LIFE at its full makes calm more deep than death ;
The noon air, lulled with harmonies of light,
Is peacefuller than the vague void of night.
So Love at its full noon hears with hushed breath
What the sweet past to the fair future saith,
But yet not then nor ever is Love quite
At rest ;—it stirs all currents of delight
With sighs, and ever something questioneth.

Dear Wife, it is not weariness nor doubt
Moves thee to hold thy brimming cup for wine.
The years may soothe, but never quite wear out
That tragic strain which made young love
divine,
Else were this world but poor in fruitful deed,
And we were blind to Heaven's immortal need.

MAY 18, 1862

COMES May, with haste and hope kindling a flush
Upon her cheek,—one white fore-finger's tip
Deepening the dinted dimple of her lip,
The other in gay menace stretched to hush
Those clamorous throats whose torrent-welcomes
gush,
While her swift feet the dallying winds outstrip,
And glow till winking daisies, as they dip
Beneath them, redden with a kindred blush.

Sudden, with tense regard she stands and lists
Till a soft baby-whimper thrills her ear,—
Then with quick sign she sets her melodists
All piping a wild birth-song, far and near ;
And leaning low,—of her own child she wists,
In those new violet eyes, reborn and doubly dear.

MAY 18, 1863

FROM thee, my wife, born of a transient May
A May immortal is assured to me ;—
For when, at Spring's first fluted call I see
The wrinkled world put Wintry cares away,
And at the touch of soft bird-breasts grow gay
And break in flowery laughter, young and free,—
I note therein a dawning dream of thee,
A soul sun-pictured on a fleeting day.

What if that drearier Winter lowered of late,
Rough with the rude reviling tongues of men,
And black with blotted hopes and hovering hate,
And cold with frozen friendships, failing then,
In the poised crisis of a dubious fate ?
I felt thy heart's beat, and was strong again !

MAY 18, 1865

WORK-WORN and winter-chilled, I yet can see
 Impassioned May laugh in the violet's eye,
 Dream in the deep blue mystery of the sky,
 And cast white singing robes on the live tree
 That rings with carols, votive, Love, to thee.
 All as of old,—but now doth underlie
 A meaning deeper than in Mays gone by,
 As if to *seem* were less, and more to *be*.

For these quick Mays have touched thy head and
 mine,
 With blanching fingers,—and, as they would
 shed
 Some keepsake truth when transient blooms are
 fled,
 Have left us, here and there, a silver line.
 O! sweet but swift youth's May of passion swells,—
 To thought and sorrow May brings Immortelles!

MAY 18, 1868

COMES, as of old, thy natal season, gay
 With gush of song and sudden surge of flowers,
 And provocation from the golden hours
To weave their beauty in my festal lay :
And somewhat now, beneath this flux and play
 Of transient forms, we know of constant powers
 That work from change to change, through sun
 and showers,
To culminate in some diviner May.

So, when thine eyes endow the day with light,
 Or soothe the dark with dew of answering tears,
I dream of that which knows nor day nor night
 But links with one clear purpose all the years,—
Love, loving still through sorrow and delight
 Till May bloom deathless in supernal spheres !

MAY 18, 1869

THE leaf yearns toward the shadow it trembles
o'er ;

The low-breathed dissonance thou hearest moan
Under sweet music, beggars the pure tone ;
The sea sighs for more beauty, though it pour
Fire-crested flakes along a shimmering shore ;
And to the insatiate heart mere love alone,
Though tender, tried, and true, and all its own
For life and death, is nothing—if not more.

What means it then ? Are life and love in vain ?
And do these transient Mays which come and
go,

Whitening not thorns alone, and planting pain
From limb to limb, but mock a musing brain ?

O ! anti-typal Christ, it is not so,
If, crowning all our loves, Thy love we know !

MAY 18, 1870

LET die the dream that every dream must die !
They fade as fades the rainbow, shedding dew
That robe the grey old world with floral hues
As bright as those which spanned the dreaming
sky.—

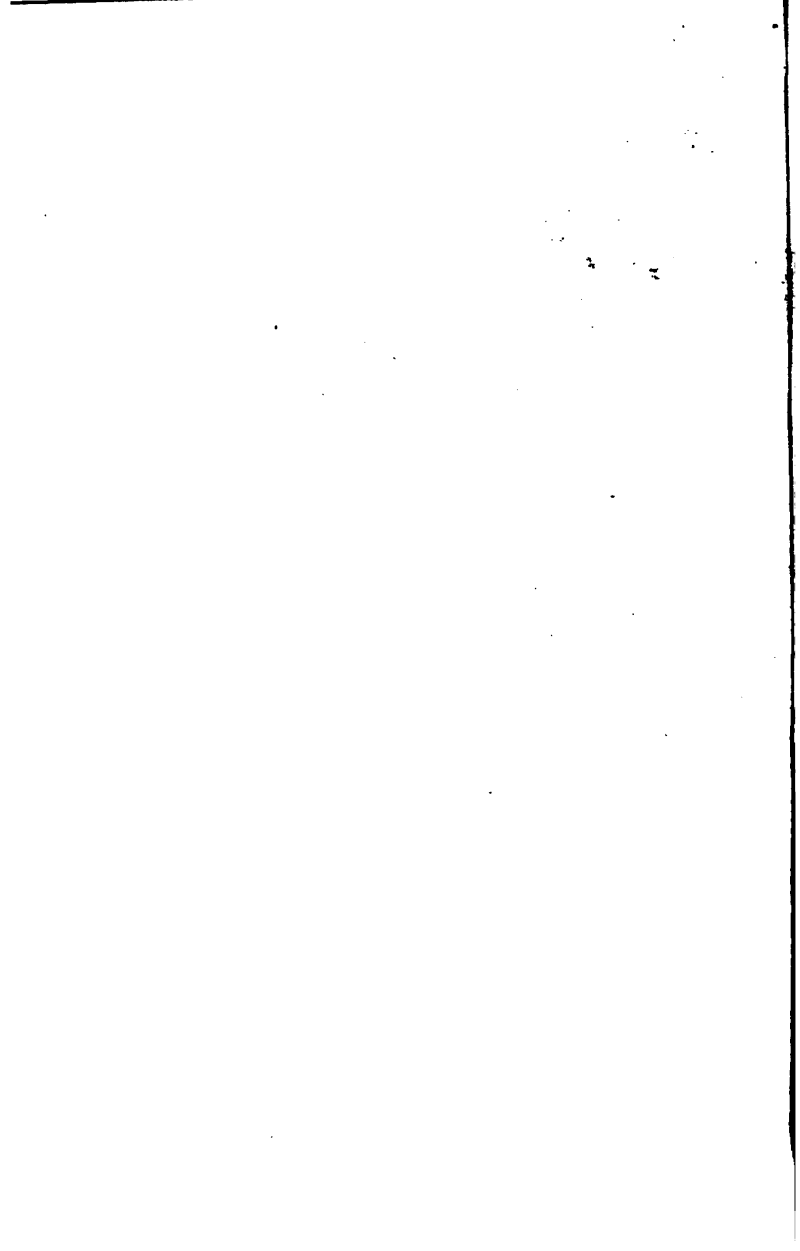
So, on this norland knoll where thou and I,
Pausing in evening walks, would sit and muse
O'er the grand plains, and say "here would we
choose

To build a home," then wake to smile or sigh
At the fond fancy,—lo ! the walls gleam white,
The garden blooms,—no dream, but truth
possest ;

And we, if all our dream was dreamed aright
Shall in a fair porch take our evening rest,
And, waiting with clasped hands a holier light,
Watch o'er the woods the sun droop to the west !

Northwold.

TRANSLATIONS



IN MEMORIAM

(From the German of Uhland)

I

THOU, mother, didst behold mine eye
 Drink the first gleam of mortal day ;
 'Twas mine to watch the sunset's ray
 Upon thy fading features die.

II

O ! mother mine, thy grave is fitly made
 Here in a tranquil nook, to thee well known,
 Hallowed and homelike with familiar shade,
 And with unfading flowers quite overgrown.

There, as we saw thee die, thou sleep'st,—no line
 Of peace or pain from thy dear face departs,—
 And there a new life may be ever thine ;
 For this thy grave is in my heart of hearts !

III

Sank silently the wind-borne moan
Of mourners chaunting dole,
But never dies the tender tone
Of thee that haunts my soul.

IV

Forth came a friend, while scarce the grave
Had closed above thy breast,
With roses many-hued, to wave
O'er thy calm place of rest.

With blushes twain thy head was dight,
Twin damasks warmed thy feet,
While blooms of pure perennial white
Upon thy heart lay sweet.

V

A leaf drops fluttering to the plain,
Of sunshine weary, tired of rain :
When first that leaf drank light and dew
My parents' faithful love I knew.

A leaf : how transient is its day !
The pet of Spring is Autumn's prey ;
And yet that leaf, before it fell,
Outlived the love I loved so well.

FROM SCHILLER

GÜTE UND GRÖSSE

THERE be two virtues only,—O that they united
stood !

Were but goodness ever great, and were but
greatness ever good !

DAS KIND IN DER WIEGE

Blest suckling ! Thy cradle to thee is an infinite
space ;

Grow a man, and the Infinite shall be too narrow
a place !

HEINE'S SONNETS TO HIS MOTHER

(From the "*Buch der Lieder*")

I

It is my wont to bear my head full high,—
 Nor can my mind boast much of pliant grace ;
 If even the King should look me in the face
 I should not wear a downward look—not I !
 And yet, dear Mother, I will not deny,
 However my proud soul thus guards its place,
 If I but feel thy blessed soft embrace,
 I stand before thee timorous and shy.
 Is it thy spirit that subdues me so—
 Thy lofty spirit which can pierce through all
 And take its shining way in Heaven's full glow ?
 It stings me to the soul when I recall
 How many a deed of mine thy heart has riven,—
 That tender heart which so much love has given.

II

Once in mad mood I left thee to begin
A quest through all the world from land to
land,—
For I would see what love I could command,
Dreaming that love must somewhere clasp its kin.
No path there was but I sought love therein ;
At every door I took my suppliant stand
And begged small alms of love with out-
stretched hand,
But only hatred's chilling sneer could win.
And ever still for love I wandered, ever,
Ever for love, and yet love found I never,
And so turned homeward, sick and sore dis-
traught.
But when, to welcome me, thou didst arise,
Oh ! what was that which swam in thy moist eyes ?
'Twas the dear Love which I so long had
sought.

FROM JUVENAL

(WITH A MODERN TURN !)

1858

“ Multi
Committunt eadem diverso crimina fato
Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.”
Juvenal, Sat. xiii.

THE assassin's part, by many played,
Brings various guerdons down ;
Orsini's head drops from the blade,—
Napoleon's wears a crown !

THE DEDICATION TO "FAUST"

ONCE more ye come, the glimmering shadow-
train,

Which met, in times of old, my troubled glance
Shall I attempt to grasp you once again ?

Still yields my heart to that illusive trance ?

Ye press upon me ! So,—I own your reign,

As from your veil of vapour ye advance ;
Your magic breath is o'er my bosom stealing,
I thrill with a new stress of youthful feeling.

With you come back the glad days long ago,—

Shades of the loved and lost salute mine eyes ;
And like an old and half-forgotten tone,

First-love and friendship in my spirit rise.
Their grief ye bring too ; with familiar moan

I track life's labyrinthic chase of lies,
Calling the dear ones who, by Fate bereft
Of their fair days, me sorrowing here have left.

They will not hear the song I now shall sing,
The souls who loved the music of my prime ;
All scattered is that friendly gathering,—
Alas, forgotten is that early rhyme !
To crowds unknown I now must wake the string,
Though my heart saddens as their plaudits
chime.
Those whom I would have gladdened with my
lay.
If still they live, have wandered far away.

Unwontedly my soul is yearning now
For that serene and solemn spirit-land ;
My song with inarticulate murmurs low
Wakes like the wind-harp to an unseen hand.
I can but tremble, till the quick tears flow,
And all the stubborn heart grows soft and bland.
Fact dies away into the dim Ideal,
And the dead Past becomes the only Real.

NOTES



NOTES



NOTE 1

RYDAL MOUNT

This sonnet was begun whilst waiting in the garden of Rydal for his first interview with Wordsworth.

NOTE 2

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

In Main's "Treasury of English Sonnets" will be found the following :—

"THE COURSE OF TIME

" No, no arresting the vast wheel of time
That round and round still turns with onward might,
Stern, dragging thousands to the dreaded night
Of an unknown hereafter. Faith to climb
In thought to that supernal Force sublime
Who guides the circling wheel aright
Alone can steady our dismay at sight
Of that huge radius imaged in my rhyme.

Some, swept resistless through a mire of sin,
 Some, carried smoothly on in downy ease,
 Some, whirled to swift-destruction mid the din
 And crash of sudden end ! Oh, may it please
 The Guider merciful to will my course
 Shall be in peace and trust devoid remorse ?

"CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE."

1875, *in his 89th year.*

This evoked the following beautiful response in sonnet form from a friend in England (to whom he sent a copy) who desires to remain anonymous :—

"Amen, my brave old friend, to all thy prayers," &c.

NOTE 3

S. E. L.

Miss Sallie E. Leese—daughter of Mr. Joseph Leese of Bowdon. She died suddenly. The allusion is to her perfect singing of "Had I the wings of a dove," from Mendelssohn's 55th Psalm.

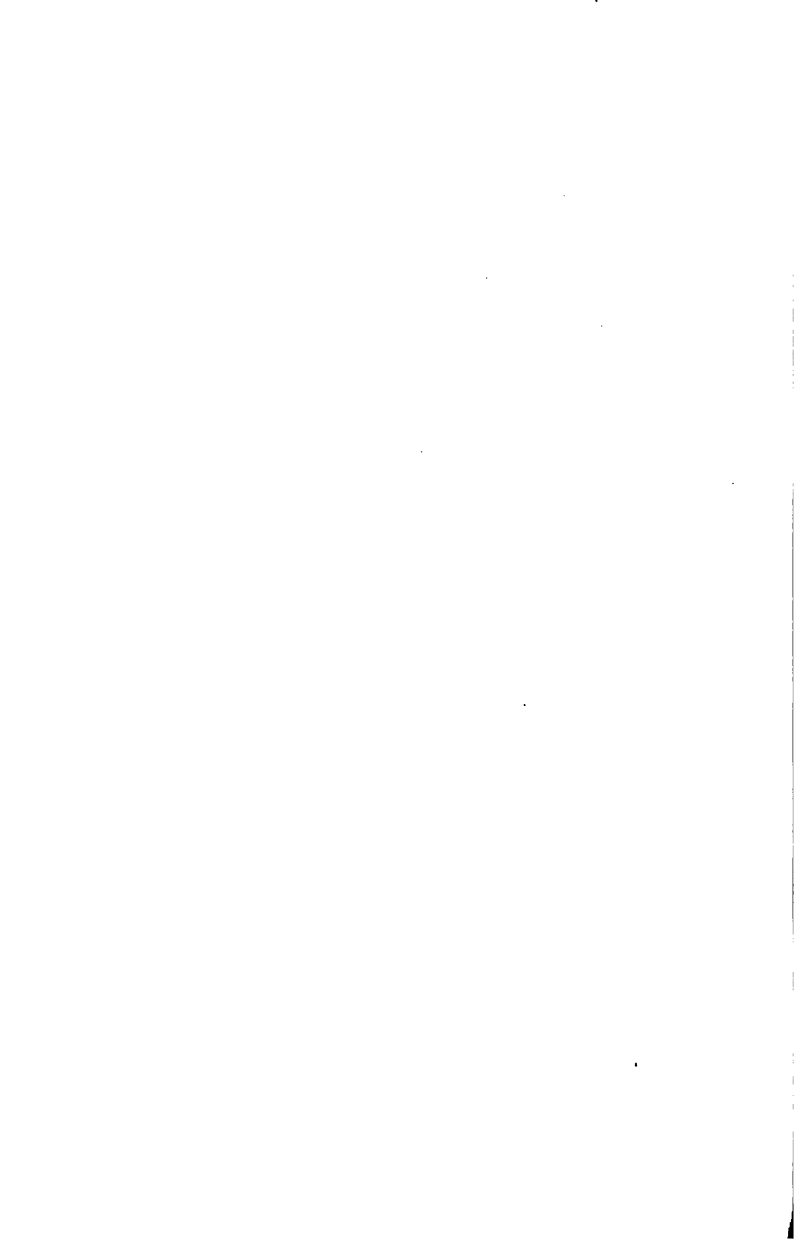
NOTE 4

TO HIS FATHER

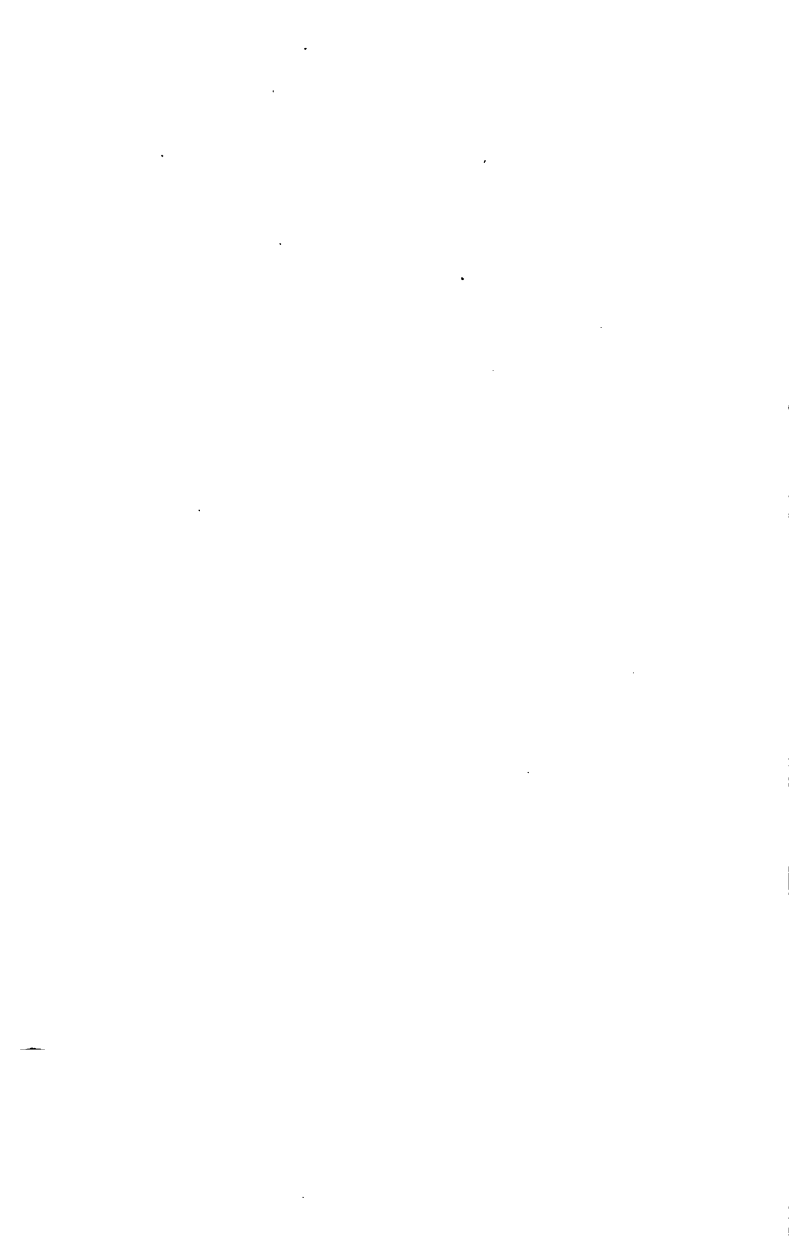
At a period when fortunes were mostly ground out of men and machinery indiscriminately, Mr. James Mills was, by reason of his kind and sympathetic government as manager of large cotton works, beloved and respected by the "hands," but especially by the children, the little "minders" and tenders, whom he hated to see toiling when they ought to have been running free in the fresh air, and for whom he had ever a kindly word and a helping hand.

NOTE 5**ANNIE S. PETRIE LIPSCOMB**

A favourite niece. She delighted in the study of astronomy, and her Star Maps and popular Lectures on Sun-spots were well known. In the midst of a rich, full young life, not long after her marriage, Death laid his hand upon her, and she vanished from our sight.



The Gresham Press,
UNWIN BROTHERS,
WOKING AND LONDON.





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